



NEWS RELEASE

HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF POLICE OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

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Drug Investigation Nets 52 Arrests *HCPD Drug Tip Line Provided Critical Information*

The Howard County Police Department is announcing the results of a drug investigation that resulted in the arrest of 52 suspects. The announcement concludes "Operation Mesmerize," an 8-month investigation into the sale and distribution of illegal drugs in Columbia, Ellicott City, Elkridge, Laurel and Jessup.

Operation Mesmerize was launched in January to address the street level sale and use of illegal drugs in Howard County neighborhoods. Detectives received information through the police department's drug tip line that lead to numerous search warrants in areas where citizens reported drug use and sales were taking place. Detectives used surveillance, confidential informants and citizen information to gather evidence in each case.

Operation Mesmerize resulted in 23 search and seizure warrants, 47 adult arrests and five juvenile arrests. Police recovered heroin, cocaine, marijuana, prescription drugs and drug paraphernalia, including packaging material, scales and drug utensils.

The Howard County Police Department's drug tip line, 410-290-DRUG, was a critical component of the investigation. After a major drug operation last year, Operation Clean Sweep, in which 37 people were arrested, detectives noticed that the remaining drug dealers had moved inside apartments or houses to avoid detection by police on the streets. Tips from citizens on the drug tip line helped officers identify where drugs were being sold and used indoors.

Police continue to encourage citizens to use the drug tip line. Callers may remain anonymous and can have a significant impact on the use and sale of drugs in their communities.

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Editor's Note: For a list of names of those arrested, contact the Office of Public Affairs at (410) 313-2236.